

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Claims 1-9 (Canceled).

10. (Currently Amended) A purified polypeptide encoded by a nucleic acid molecule selected from the group ~~comprising~~ consisting of:

(A) a purified nucleic acid molecule of sequence SEQ ID NO: 2;

(B) a purified nucleic acid molecule encoding the amino acid sequence SEQ ID NO: 1; and

(C) a purified nucleic acid molecule degenerate from SEQ ID NO: 2 as a result of the genetic code; ~~or~~

~~(D) a purified nucleic acid molecule that encodes a core+1 polypeptide or a variant of core+1 polypeptide, wherein the variant is detectable by Western analysis using HCV-positive human serum or monoclonal antibody against core protein, and wherein the amino acid sequence of the variant shares at least 80% identity with a native core+1 polypeptide amino acid sequence.~~

11. (Original) A purified polypeptide according to claim 10 having a molecular weight of approximately 17.5 kD as determined by SDS-PAGE.

12. (Original) A purified polypeptide according to claim 10 in non-glycosylated form.

13-16. (Cancelled)

17. (Original) Purified antibodies that bind to a polypeptide of claim 10.

18. (Original) Purified antibodies according to claim 17, wherein the antibodies are monoclonal antibodies.

Claims 19-32. (Cancelled)

33. (Original) An immunological complex comprising a core+1 polypeptide of HCV and an antibody that specifically recognizes said polypeptide.

Claims 34-44. (Cancelled)